

Resources on **Asbestos in Vermiculite Insulation**

Asbestos in vermiculite insulation has become a recent national concern to a variety of federal agencies and to many citizens throughout the country. Vermiculite ore containing asbestos from the W.R. Grace and Company mine in Libby, Montana was processed, then marketed as Zonolite Attic Insulation from 1963 to 1984. Reportedly, this insulation was used in millions of homes and businesses nationwide, and in over 50,000 homes here in Washington State.

Vermiculite insulation has a layered structure and glittery, granular appearance. The granules are small about the size of a pencil eraser, and may have a silvery, gold, translucent or brownish cast. After years in the attic, however, the granules may darken to black or gray. Other insulation materials like fiberglass are pink, yellow, or white and have a texture like cotton candy. Cellulose and rock wool both appear gray in color. Cellulose has the texture of finely shredded newspaper, and rock wool of dense wool.

Washington State Department of Health shares the concerns of federal agencies and citizens regarding potential exposure to insulation containing asbestos by workers and residents. Asbestos has long been recognized as a human health hazard, and inhalation of the asbestos fibers should be avoided. If you suspect that your attic is insulated with vermiculite, the following resources will help you find answers to your questions regarding asbestos in vermiculite insulation.

Who do I contact?

Your primary contact regarding asbestos in vermiculite and vermiculite products is EPA (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), Region 10 at 1-800-424-4372.

How do I know if my insulation contains asbestos?

If you suspect that you have vermiculite insulation in your home, we recommend that you don't disturb it. To determine whether your insulation contains asbestos, contact an asbestos consultant or laboratory listed in your Yellow Pages under "Asbestos Consulting and Testing." Ask for specific instructions on safely collecting insulation samples for testing and for interpretation of test results. In addition, numerous laboratories that conduct asbestos testing participate voluntarily in a national certification program, the [National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program](http://ts.nist.gov/ts/htdocs/210/214/scopes/plmtm.htm) (<http://ts.nist.gov/ts/htdocs/210/214/scopes/plmtm.htm>). This Web site lists laboratories located in your area.

I need to have my insulation removed, what should I do?

If your insulation does contain asbestos, don't attempt to remove it yourself. Have a state-certified asbestos abatement contractor who is trained in removing asbestos safely do the job. You can find a list of [certified asbestos abatement contractors on the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries' Web site](http://www.lni.wa.gov/WISHA/p-ts/Asbestos/AsbestosContractors.pdf). (<http://www.lni.wa.gov/WISHA/p-ts/Asbestos/AsbestosContractors.pdf>).

Is my health at risk?

If you are concerned about possible exposure to asbestos, consult with your health care provider. Health information about asbestos in insulation can be found at [EPA's website, Asbestos Contamination in Vermiculite](http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/insulation.html) (<http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/insulation.html>).

More Resources

- [US EPA: Asbestos home page](http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/asbestos_in_schools.html)
(http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/asbestos_in_schools.html)
- [US EPA: Asbestos in Your Home](http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/ashome.html) (<http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/ashome.html>)
- [US EPA: Asbestos in Schools](http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/asbestos_in_schools.html)
(http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/asbestos_in_schools.html)
- [Asbestos: Removal:, Training-Certification, Regulations, Resources - from Washington State Department of Labor and Industries](http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/LicensingReq/Asbestos/default.asp)
(<http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/LicensingReq/Asbestos/default.asp>)

Should you need additional information on asbestos in insulation, please contact the following DOH Staff:

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